

Black Feminism & Intersectionality: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Expressional & Relational Value of language in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"

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Abstract

This paper tries to conduct a thorough and concise critical discourse analysis revealing the discursive operations of black feminism and intersectionality in the poem "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou. In the aim of doing CDA, it takes help from Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model to highlight the deviation portrayed by the poet against the discursive structures of "female oppression" and "racism" through the expressional and relational value of language in the poem. Angelou's writing reveals the discursive constructions of misogyny and racism in a way that becomes relevant to every woman around the world who has ever faced prejudice for her sex. Besides, the framework of intersectionality formulated by Kimberle Crenshaw is also employed to examine power relations between black women and their oppressors. The paper analyses the ways in which Angelou is challenging these discursive structures through the help of Ghani and Naz's article "Race, Feminism and Representation: an Inquiry into Maya Angelou's Poetry" (2007). The CDA of the poem discloses that the poem, along with radiating pride and love for intersectionality and black feminism, also advocates the empowerment of not only women in general but black women in specific along with the advancement of people of colour.

Key terms: Black feminism, intersectionality, expressional and relational value of language, women empowerment, advancement of people of colour.

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to conduct a comprehensive explication of Angelou's "Still I Rise." By employing Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis to reveal the ways in which

suppression and discrimination are imposed on women of colour and African people by the discursive structures of “patriarchy” and “racism” through the expressional and relational value of words in the poem. As In *Language and Power* (1989), Norman Fairclough states that,

“The ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function.” (Fairclough 1989: vi)

“Still I rise” was written by Maya Angelou in her third volume of poetry “*And Still I Rise*” and was published by Random House in 1978. The main history of this poem is centred on her very own life story in Arkansas, where sexism and racism were rampant during her early life. From the 1930s to 1940s, Arkansas, specifically Stamps, became the American south's representation and its practice of sexual brutality and racial discrimination. Maya Angelou started her poetry as a weapon to fight back after years of public fighting for equality in society. Maya’s purpose of poetry was to create a communication channel with people who were in the same position as herself and her oppressors. In “Still I Rise”, it is obvious that Maya Angelou is expressing her personal feelings regarding gender and racial inequality. Her poem “Still I Rise” touches on being an unapologetically black woman in a society infused with institutionalized racism. “Does my sassiness upset you?” and “Out of the huts of history’s shame I rise” are both quotes that set the poem's tone and give a better understanding of Angelou’s perspective. When black women write about feminism or what it is like to live in society as a woman, they nearly always intertwine their heritage as enslaved Africans. For slavery may have been abolished in America over 100 years ago, yet the effects linger in society today. Therefore when black women speak about equality, they must visit equality in the race as well as equality between sexes because, for them, the two go hand in hand. This is the basis of intersectional feminism.

This poem intensely clarifies – while eradicating the women of colour's social subordination – that it ignores the constitution and injustice level matters. It aspects only that there will always be those who will ‘rise’ up from these oppressions and progress and change the nature and course of the society for the betterment. This was something which Maya Angelou accomplished in her lifetime.

In 1994, this poem, “Still I Rise”, became the centre of an advertising campaign for the 50th anniversary of “United Negro College Fund.” However, at his inauguration as president of South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela, who spent twenty-seven years in prison, delivered this same poem.

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On November 18 2015, US pop star Nicki Minaj recited this poem in a stirring performance in Los Angeles for "Shining A Light: A Concert for Progress on Race in America".

1.1 Research Questions

- How the ideologies of black feminism and intersectionality have been explicated in Still I Rise?
- What kind of figurative language is incorporated in the selected poem marking the experiential and relational values of the words?

2. Literature Review

The groundbreaking effort was initiated in the same field of black feminism and intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw, which laid down the theoretical basis of this field. Class oppression, gender identity, racism and sexism are intimately bound together. However, these concepts relate to each other, and this term is called intersectionality, which Kimberlé Crenshaw first claimed in 1989 in her insightful essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". In her work, Crenshaw describes intersectionality as how multiple oppressions have been experienced. This description by Crenshaw nullifies the notion of intersectionality as something abstract. In order to concretize the concept, she elaborates the idea of intersectionality by referring it to the analogy of a traffic intersection, or crossroad, by considering an intersection of traffic, coming and going in all four directions. Furthermore, relating to the notion of discrimination against the black woman by comparing it with traffic through an intersection may flow one way, and it may move in another way. However, an intersection may cause an accident. It can be triggered by cars travelling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all. According to her, the way black females are harmed could be due to race or sex; therefore, it is difficult to identify what was the major cause.

In many cases, the harassment that happens to a black woman is a combination of both sexual and racial prejudices. Due to this sexism/racism based intersectionality, the abuse caused to black women often does not fit neatly within the legal categories. Nevertheless, the definition of sexism & racism does not suffice to provide proper legal protection to Black women as they are vague and way too general in their application: 1) sexism is based upon a tacit reference to the injustices provoked by all, which also including white women. In contrast,

racism includes all females of all colours. Keeping in view the aforementioned discussion, the framework established by Crenshaw (1989) renders Black women legally more “invisible” and one without many legal options available to fight for their genuine rights or against racial or sexual abuse.

An article entitled, An explication of self-discovery in Maya Angelou’s *Still I rise*, was written in the *International Journal Of English* by S. Sangeetha. The article discussed the theme of hope and confidence prevalent in the poem.

Moreover, an article titled “Rising from The Dust: A study of Maya Angelou’s poetry” was written by Dr Darshana Trivedi. The article described Angelou’s poems discussed social and political issues involving African American women confidently and optimally. The article focuses on the point that Angelou’s poems refer to the indomitable spirit of black women who triumphs despite adversity and dire patriarchal conditions.

Research work was done by Camelia Elias entitled “The wild woman”, which highlighted how Angelou could be regarded as the wild woman because of the freedom and continued struggle in the face of oppressing forces of female oppression.

Another research was carried out by Stevani Indriati in 2005. The research finds out that war against racial issues was linked with female repression for black females, dominating other themes in Angelou’s works. It showed that Angelou is someone who stands up not only for her personal beliefs but also for the beliefs of others. The final conclusion is that Maya Angelou is a Wild Woman who defies the prejudices of race and gender plus inequalities of society with her vastly influential creative discourse.

3. Research Methodology

In recent years, much has been published on Critical Discourse Analysis in its varied sense. Owing to the nature of Critical Discourse Analysis, It seems to be quite challenging to explain in simple forms. It involves a number of common tenets and employs a big range of skills and techniques. It aims mainly to find out the social and political inequalities that exist in the society. Fairclough (1995b) offers us with a very useful definition that summarizes most of the former definitions of the CDA:

CDA is the study of] often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power

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and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power.

(Fairclough 1995b: 132-3)

Critical Discourse Analysis varies from the other methods of the discourse analysis in so far as it is the 'critical'. The term "Critical" point toward displaying connections and the causes which are the hidden; it also suggests intervention, i.e. providing the resources for only those who may be the underprivileged through the change.' Fairclough (1995 a: 9). The exposure of the things hidden is very significant, They cannot be fought since they are not obvious to the persons involved. Norman Fairclough (1989), in the Language and the Power, starts to 'observe how the structures and pressures of the social institutions in which we live and work constrain the methods in which we communicate.'(Fairclough-1989: VI). For the analysis of the texts, the book proposes a complete framework. He (1989: 24-6) defines his opinions on what the discourse and the analysis of the text are. Fairclough classifies the three basic levels of the discourse, in all these levels being the firstly, the social situations of the production and the interpretation, i.e. such as factors in the society that have led to the fabrication of the text and, moreover, how all these factors mainly effect the interpretations. At the second level, the procedure of the production and the interpretations, for example how the text has been formed and, particularly, this affects the process of the interpretation. Third one is the outcome of the previous two stages, the text. Conforming to these three levels or the dimensions of the discourse, Fairclough prescribes the three stages of the CDA:

- Description: it is a stage in which the formal properties of the text are discussed.
- Interpretation: this stage deals with mutual relationship between the text and the interaction – with seeing (text-a product of production process, and in process of interpretation as a source.
- Explanation: the relationship of both the social context and interaction – with social determination within the production and interpretations processes, and particularly of their social effects. Fairclough (1989: 26)

He (1989:110-2) offers not only with a specific list of the ten major questions but also with a number of the sub-questions, this could be addressed during text analysis. This is not meant to be an exhaustive or all-inclusive list; however, it is a proposed list of prospective directions or areas to study. The ten questions are broken down into three categories:

(A) Vocabulary

1. What kind of the experiential standards do the words have?
What classification schemes are drawn upon?
Are there words which are ideologically contested?
Is there rewording or over wording?
What ideologically significant meaning relations are there between words?
2. What type of the relational standards do the words have?
Are there any euphemistic term?
Are there any words that are clearly formal or informal one?
3. What kind of the communicative values do the words have?
4. What type of metaphors is employed?

(B) Grammar

5. What are the experiential standards of the grammatical features?
What are the most common processes and participants?
Is the nature of the agency unclear?
Are procedures as they appear to be?
Are there any normalizations?
Are the sentences passive or active?
Are the sentences negative or positive?
6. What are the relational standards of the grammatical features?
Which modes are employed?
Are there any essential characteristics of the relational modality?
Are pronouns that we and you both used, and if so, how?
7. What kind of communicative standards do the grammatical characteristics have?
Are there any significant features of the expressive modality?
8. How do (basic/simple) sentences connect?
What are the logical connectors employed?
Is coordination or subordination a feature of complex sentences?
What are the conventions for referring within and outside of the text?

(C) Textual structure

9. What are the rules of interaction?

Is it possible for one participant to influence the turns of the others?

10. What are the text's bigger scale structures? Fairclough (1989: 110-2)

Definitions of the three terms; relational, expressive and experiential, are of the great prominence to the accepting of the proposed framework. Examining experiential standards, CDA aims to demonstrate how a text's producer's experience of the social or natural environment' (ibid: 112) influences and is reflected in a text. Formal features with experience significance can be used to determine a person's worldview. Relational standards may classify the supposed social relationship between the text producer and text recipient. The third and foremost dimension, expressive standards, gives an insight into 'producer's appraisal (in the broadest sense) of the bit of the truth it relates to.' (ibid: 112) This should recognize the related parties to the social identities of the text. I feel that these standards are in core mainly (or entirely) subjective. Therefore, Fairclough (1989: 112) goes on just to categorize another standard that any formal feature may have, connective value, as its purpose may be to the connection between parts of the text. Fairclough also focuses that 'any assumed formal characteristic may concurrently have two or the three of these values or standards' (ibid: 112).

The researcher will take insight from the above mentioned model of Fairclough in order to attempt the critical discourse analysis of the selected work of Angelou, and in turn analyze the experiential, relational and expressive value of language employed by Angelou in the selected poem.

Moreover the second framework that has been employed for analysing the notion of black feminism and Intersectionality in the selected text is that of Crenshaw's. Ground breaking work was initiated in the field of black feminism and intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw which in fact laid down the theoretical basis of this field. Sexism, class oppression, gender identity and racism are inextricably bound together and the way these concepts relate to each other is called intersectionality, a term first coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 in her insightful essay, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. As mentioned earlier that for Crenshaw intersectionality is more a concrete aspect rather than an

abstraction as due to it the concept of racial and sexual abuse taking place simultaneously can be understood with more clarity.

4. Data Analysis

Angelou's poem is replete with use of rhetoric and figurative language and it resonates as the voice of the ostracized and mauled. To begin with the title clearly reveal the notion of deviation against the discursive structures of racism and female oppression, and it is propagated throughout the text. The very use of the word 'still' indicates towards some phenomenon that is being experienced for a large period of time than it should have been. The poet uses the word 'still' is employed by the poet to explicate the continuity of the hegemonic norms of oppressive persecution of the society. Moreover deeper analysis shows that the word "I" can also be seen as a symbol for women, who must upsurge and stand united in their fight against patriarchal oppression.

Moreover the title can as well be seen as an indication of the ways in which the black Americans should stand fiercely united in the face of discrimination. "Still I Rise" is a poem in which Angelou is not only showing the ways in which various sexist and racist discursive practices are propagating in the society but she also challenges all such discursive practices and their practitioners openly as well. She shows ways of attitudes and behaviours that will help women to keep on developing individually and psychologically, despite prejudice and favouritism.

Maya Angelou once said in an interview with Bill Moyers:

"Complaining is very dangerous, I'd rather protest than complain: Because whining not only makes you ugly but it lets the brute know there's a victim in the neighbourhood."(Interview with Bill Moyers at www.dancinginthedarkness.com/articles)

By using words like "bitter" and "twisted lies" she scoffs the society as it has created sexist as well as racist discourses, observations and decrees. The poet also uses the phrase: "write me down in history" to highlight the fact that one of the processes for the circulation of such unjust discursive practices is history because history is always "His story", it is written from the male perspective. History is written as per the society and its set of courses, which has always been dominated by males, and the people who dare to be different are always depicted as the adversaries and wrong doers. The bitter fact that how society always put the people of the higher strata (male and that also white) on the pedestal of righteousness and

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the people of the lower strata (female and that also of colour) on the square of shame, is also evidently revealed by the poetess.

It is not just a mere coincidence that the first form of oppression discussed by the poet is the one that is embedded in writing:

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies (1-2)

Written discourses such as history, literature, articles, and curriculum are the most effective ways of circulation of discourses, in this way they are not only circulated in their own era but they get transmitted and repeated from generation to generation.

Angelou challenges all such hegemonic written discourses by writing this poem. She renovates writing, one of the most imperative means of ascendancy, into a tool of emancipation. The poem commences not with the description of physical suppression or literal viciousness, but by laying bare the ways in which discursive kinds of writing can incarcerate and blind the vision of both the oppressors and the oppressed. First and foremost, Angelou presents the way for defying such discourses i.e. if women want to liberate themselves they must first unshackle their rationality patterns along with revolutionizing the thought processes of their subjugators. The first instance of physical violence is referred to in the third line of the poem and that as well is strongly employed in a metaphorical manner. Metaphorically, to tread another person into the dirt means to extremely humiliate the other person. Yet no sooner does the speaker imagine being abused in this way than she immediately responds, "But still, like dust, I'll rise". The use of simile "like dust" is variously effective. It imparts a very unconventional meaning to dust that no matter how trodden upon it is it still rises whenever the wind blows. Here again Angelou first show the discursive practices of the oppressors (male) and then presents the solution for defying such oppression. For dust to rise it must be unsettled from the ground in order for it to leave and rise and it is a natural phenomenon, the more one tries to settle it down with force the more it rises, and for this quality of dirt Angelou creates the simile between women and dirt, the more men will try to suppress them with the force of discursive social structures the more they will rise and challenge them and such discursive structures and practices of society like a natural phenomenon. In this way Angelou is sowing the seed of hope in the psyche of her reader's (in general women's) mind, because hope gives the courage to defy oppressive social norms.

The art of rhetoric is utilized by Angelou to foreground the clout and influence that a woman can have, by considering herself in an advantaged state as compared to a male because of her sexy femininity, and her contentment with her gender:

"Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room."

Angelou portrays women as intelligent, powerful and confident creatures, who can use their physical appeal to empower and manipulate their oppressors, so instead of showing it as a reason of their oppression she uses it as a tool to defy that oppression. The predominant use of the rhetorical questions in the poem as could be seen in lines 5, 6, 13, 14, 17, 25 and 28, reveals women's (especially black women) and Black slaves' perpetual and intentional journey for identity and freedom from the subjugation and despotism of males (white males) and the white masters respectively. Angelou uses the simile "I walk like I've got oil wells"—which reveals that she is projecting immense self-confidence as though she owns immeasurable heaps of money, but in fact she exuberates this self-reliance because she is not only quite contented rather celebrating her gender and skin colour. By flaunting her gender and care-free persona she resonates the idea that no oppressive force, no social or economic worry can subdue her either physically or metaphorically because her spirit is abound with the wealth of wisdom and confidence.

The expressional and relational value of the words in the next section of the poem show that equivalence is an inevitable force which will pave its path irrespective of the society's despotic and repressive discourses. She compares impartiality with the forces of nature that will eventually crush and shatter down the unnatural discursive behaviours as the tide lets nothing stand in its way, as the celestial bodies shine and soothe on their own will, regardless of the wishes and norms of human civilization. By comparing herself to perennial natural forces she reinforces the idea that just because she is a woman and also a black one, no one should doubt that these natural attributes will prove to be her weaknesses rather these natural characteristics are the ones that she will flaunt and conquer the chauvinistic and racist world.

By using the simile "Just like moons and like suns"— she draws a prominent comparison between the resilient valour and tenacious willpower of her personality with the perennial routines of the celestial cycles. Angelou's use of similes of Nature for women and black

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people in fact reveal that she is presenting the discursive structures of patriarchal oppression and racism as 'false consciousnesses' which can be and would be shattered by women and black people as their existence and their resilience is the real as the law of Nature.

The first person narrative is employed by Angelou right from the title of the poem and on it pursues in the whole poem not without any reason rather the very title sets the tone, shape and resonance of the poem very evidently. She transforms the 1st person narrative into her personal weapon for shunning and reprimanding the social order and its unnatural discursive exercises who wish to see her shattered, but she strongly and loudly apprises the racist and chauvinistic world that despite of all oppression and ostracization women will still rise. Angelou again makes use of rhetoric and asks what the wish of her tyrants is in a self-reliant tone. She puts forward the questions that do they yearn to see her battered, bruised, subdued and crying with a soul that is crushed, lost and defeated. Angelou sketches out a painting through her words which projects an innocent battered soul being sneered upon by her brutal white master. As apparent in the pursuing lines.

'Does my sassiness upset you?' (Line 5), 'Why are you beset with gloom?' (Line 6), 'Did you want to see me broken?' (Line 13), 'Does my haughtiness offend you?' (Line 18), 'Does my sexiness upset you?' (Line 25)

The technique of rhetoric is used for expressing the baseless and inhumane wishes of the subjugators strongly foreground the partiality and groundlessness of the despot's despotic propensities, the experiential value of the sentences indirectly brings the misogynist and racist psyche of the oppressor to the foreground. Immediately after presenting the discourses of oppressor's psyche Angelou shows the way through which women and black people can torture and challenge the oppressors and i.e. through their self-confidence and their optimistic smile which shows a spirit full of hope. As Angelou in her lecture at 'Michigan State University' states that,

"I think women have to develop courage. You're not born with courage, but you develop it. Try to develop your courage with smaller things. [...] One way to develop courage is to not entertain company who debase you. Don't laugh at someone who is laughing at you or putting you down. Take offense. When someone says 'I hope you won't be offended,' then you probably will be"

(Michigan State University celebrity lectures: 5-21-1990)

The simile "I laugh like I've got gold mines" reveals that the way to defy the psychic oppressor is to laugh with the confidence of someone who is wealthy, as if gold has been discovered in one's own backyard because one possesses the great wealth of spirit and hope.

Angelou uses the metaphors of 'shooting with words' (as one shoots with gun), 'cutting with eyes' (as one cuts with knife), 'killing with hatefulness' (as one kills with poison), to show the pain and hurt of her oppressor's harsh language, cruel looks and the immense hateful in inhuman behaviour towards her gender and race that can kill her metaphorically. However she uses mock imperative structures which highlight her bold and carefree attitude towards her tyrant's brutalities. The experiential and relational value of these 'active verbs' - 'shoot, cut, kill' and the refrain of the noun 'You' brings the issue of oppression to climax and emphasize the aggression of the oppressor as well as they raise the tempo of the poem, but all this aggression and heightened oppression is of no use because from personal experiences Angelou gives the solution that all such discursive practices of oppressive power will only result in aggravated resilient and resistant behaviours on part of the oppressed and will eventually lead them to their freedom. Similar views are described by Sara Mills when she mentions Foucault's ideas about power in "Discourse",

"Power is dispersed throughout social relations, that it produces possible forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviour" ('Discourse', 1997: 20)

In the pursuing lines Angelou haughtily puts forward such questions which challenge the emotions, complexes and fears of her oppressors, in turn laying bare their psyche. She raises the question that if they are apprehensive of her femininity, perturbed by her amorousness and uncomfortable with the raw appeal of her gender. Here Angelou draws the picture of a dancing woman, whose dance is not only an embodiment of her free spirit, confidence, strength but also a jubilant celebration of her femininity and sassiness. Angelou in fact ironically mocks the spitefulness and worthlessness of the real complexes which reside in the heart of her subjugators and instigate various inferiority complexes in him.

She further unveils the reason behind the patriarchal and racially discriminated social behaviours by pointing out that she is curious about this question that whether it is her amorousness or her proficient life that is making her despots uncomfortable. Then she points out that maybe it's the combination of the two traits in a single person that has made them apprehensive for the continuity of their discursive practices. So here Angelou by using rhetoric and symbols shows the way of challenging and defying such negative discursive practises. The symbolic use of 'diamonds' represents her bountiful spirit that is shining in the mirth of its owner's physiognomy. The same is attested by Ghani and Naz in their research work as,

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"Angelou's poems, not only manifest control as a whole, but also feminist psyche in control of femininity, while embodying woman on three different levels: racial, biographical and universal." (Ghani, Mamuna & Naz, Bushra, 2007: 98).

Angelou project forth the point that for a black woman the notions of gender and race are socially linked together. For her the marginalization is imposed not only because of her gender but also because of her colour and vice versa. The fact that it's a woman along with the added feature of her skin colour, inevitably makes her the sole bearer of society's hegemonic, discriminatory and inhumane discursive behaviours. Similarly Angelou has used various relational and experiential words and clauses, graphological, phonological, syntactic and lexico-semantic features to show the discursive structures of female oppression at all these levels and has also depicted ways of defying such oppressive discursive practices.

Towards the end Angelou boldly raises voice against racist discursive practices and pays a tribute to her honourable ancestors by condemning and rising above the white male oppressors and she highlights the fact that the repeated discursive practices of oppression of black people are being shattered by a black female not a black male by using the metaphors of black ocean, dream and hope for herself. She resembles her resilience, fervour and free-spiritedness with that of a mighty and majestic black ocean. The blackness of the ocean is not only a reference point towards her colour but it is also symbolically showing the boundless depths of her spirit's reservoir of strength. Maya Angelou is directly rendering herself (and indirectly comparing all black women) as the ultimate fulfilment of each and every black person's reverie of inclusion, impartiality and emancipation. She announces herself as the advocate, torch bearer and champion of human rights who has decided to rise in the face of oppression and to enlighten the darkness of patriarchal and racial discursive practices with her courage and self-confidence. The misery, pain and trauma that is experienced by other black women and men instigate her with more strength to stand upright in the face of racial and patriarchal brutality and be the voice of the silenced ones. She stands for all those who had experienced and been victimized by such discursive practices and who are still living these inhuman traumatic experiences every day. As an emancipated woman with the wealth of exercising in accordance with her will, preferences and decisions, she is the living embodiment that ultimate freedom from patriarchal and racial discursive practices is quite achievable. The speaker has every intention of writing each chapter of her life and not letting the oppressors write that history for her. She will not be held back by what the oppressors have done to her ancestors. The poem ends with the consecutive reiteration of "I rise" in the three lines of the final section which bring forth the

image of an awakening assemblage of women who after being inspired by Angelou are rising up to fight their own battles. Thus, the form of the poem is quite reminiscent of a crowd of people rising against the surge of coercion and oppressiveness – and that is, the Black American slaves. Through the repetition of “I rise” in the last three lines, the stanza takes on a powerful meditative quality that even resembles a prayer. The consecutive reiteration of “I rise” in the three lines of the final section befittingly hits the mark, because these repeated words are an affirmation of the speaker’s intentions—a song, a meditation, a prayer, a bold declaration of hope.

5. Conclusion

Angelou’s poem is replete with use of rhetoric and figurative language and when looked at through the lens of CDA it resonates as the voice of the ostracized and mauled. Angelou in “Still I Rise” focuses on this contradiction between “us” and “them”, and that it should really be mitigated, to create communal impartiality. As a feminist, the goal that she strived to achieve was not just gender impartiality but also the culmination of racial disparity. Angelou has made an excessive use of inverted structures throughout her poem because the use of inverting structures in a text is a tool that manifests deviation from the norm, and it is also used to foreground the idea of rising above the discursive practices of patriarchy and racism. There is a conscious use of “apostrophe” in the poem as a graphological tool to indicate the colloquial nature of the language use in the poem; for example: ‘I’ll’ - (lines 4, 12 and 24), ‘Cause’ - (lines 7 and 19), ‘Don’t’ - (line 18), ‘I’ve’ - (lines 7, 19 and 27), ‘That’s’ - (line 31), ‘I’m’ - (line, 33). By implication, the use of “apostrophe”, probably, not only shows the care-free attitude of the poetic persona to her uncaring audience (the white masters) but it also serves as a mean to show solidarity to her people i.e. the black people because this variety of English is spoken mostly by black people and is known as ‘African-American Vernacular English’ or ‘Black English’. The poem is symbolic as its form represents its title. If this poem were a sculpture it would have a granite plinth to stand on. . On the whole, Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” deploys rich poetic devices to a number of purposes such as explaining, illustrating, revealing, challenging and defying the unjust discursive structures of the society. All in all, the CDA of “Still I Rise” reveals that it is an inspirational poem with powerful repetitive energy, a universal message and a clear, positive pulse to encourage, strengthen and empower women. In their research work, the same philosophy of Angelou has been pointed out as,

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"Women should be tough, tender, laugh as much as possible, and live long lives, the struggle for equality continues unabated and the woman warrior who is armed with wit and courage will be among the first to celebrate victory"
(Ghani & Naz, 2007: 100)

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Appendice:

Still I Rise

[Maya Angelou](#), 1928 - 2014

"You may write me down in history

With your bitter, twisted lies,

You may trod me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?

Why are you beset with gloom?

'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells

Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain

Black Feminism & Intersectionality: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Expressional & Relational Value of language in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise"